

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
SSM-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 AID-05 IGA-02 /093 W  
-----033761 131056Z /15

O R 130931Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7193  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
RUDKAR /AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST UNN  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
USMISSION SINAI  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 5092

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, IS, US  
SUBJECT: THE BEGIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON: ISRAELI EXPECTATIONS  
AND APPREHENSIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: ISRAELIS REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT U.S./  
ISRAELI RELATIONS AND LOOK TO THE BEGIN/CARTER MEETING  
AS AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF WHETHER WE ARE HEADING  
FOR A SHOWDOWN. BEGIN CONTINUES TO EXPRESS CONFIDENCE  
THAT THE MEETING WILL BE A SUCCESS, AND THE AMBASSADOR,  
SENATOR JAVITS, AND OTHER CODELS HAVE ALSO EMPHASIZED  
OUR POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS. BUT THE RIGHT-WING ISRAELI  
PRESS AND COMMENTARY FROM THE U.S. PRESS CARRIED HERE,  
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BY HIGHLIGHTING OUR DIFFERING APPROACHES TO THE  
NEGOTIATING ISSUES AND CLAIMING THAT THERE HAS BEEN A  
STEADY EROSION IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE  
TO ISRAEL, NOURISH THE PUBLIC'S APPREHENSIONS  
AND DOUBTS.

2. AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, ISRAELIS WILL BE MEASURING

THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF BEGIN'S MISSION NOT ONLY BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH OUR DIFFERENCES ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ARE BRIDGED, BUT BY OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND RELATED ACTIONS ON U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS. PRESIDENTIAL REAFFIRMATION OF OUR SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP ALONG WITH COMMENDATION FOR BEGIN'S STATESMAN-LIKE ATTITUDE AND EXPRESSIONS OF CONFIDENCE THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO CREATE A POSITIVE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE HERE FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS. CONVERSELY, PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF A RIFT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. COUPLED WITH SIGNS OR HINTS OF A REDUCTION OF MILITARY OR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WOULD REINFORCE EXISTING AND EVER LATENT ANXIETIES AND MAKE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE DIFFICULT--IF NOT WELL-NIGH IMPOSSIBLE--THE CONTINUATION OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

3. ISRAELIS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM ARE LOOKING TO THE BEGIN-CARTER MEETING AS A LITMUS TEST OF U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS AND OF THE PROSPECTS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS REGARDING THE URGENCY OF MOVEMENT THIS YEAR TOWARD AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT AND CONTINUED ARAB PUBLIC DEMANDS FOR

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ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BORDERS AND THE CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE, ISRAELIS ARE SOMEWHAT APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WILL BE AFTER THE MEETING AND BEYOND. THE MEDIA HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE U.S. EXPECTATION THAT BEGIN WILL COME TO WASHINGTON TO MAKE SPECIFIC, CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHERE WE GO FROM HERE (A POINT WHICH I AND SEVERAL VISITING CODELS HAVE ALSO REPEATEDLY MADE) AND NOT SIMPLY TO ENGAGE IN A GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

4. WHILE THE ISRAELI PRESS, PARTICULARLY THE RIGHT-WING AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS, HAS GIVEN OVER-SUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO WHAT IT INTERPRETS AS AN EROSION IN U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS (E.G., THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S JUNE 27 STATEMENT) THE PRIME MINISTER, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THERE WILL BE NO CONFRONTATION, AND MY PUBLIC STATEMENTS ALONG WITH THOSE OF SENATOR JAVITS AND SOME AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERS HAVE EMPHASIZED OUR COMMON INTERESTS AND POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS. OPPOSITION LEADER PERES

TOLD SENATOR DOLE JULY 7 THAT HE EXPECTED THE VISIT TO BE A SUCCESS. MANY ISRAELIS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT BOTH OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THE DEBATE OVER OUR APPROACHES TO NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT BE "RESOLVED" IN A TWO-DAY VISIT. NONETHELESS, PRECISELY BECAUSE IT IS THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS, ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE IS VERY CLEAR HERE. AN ATMOSPHERE OF MOUNTING EXPECTATION IS EVIDENT HERE, BUT NOT ONE OF APPROACHING CRISES.

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INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
SSM-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 AID-05 IGA-02 /093 W  
-----049167 141011Z /15/13

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7194

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST UNN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION SINAI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TEXT PARA 9

5. THE ISRAELI PUBLIC WILL JUDGE SUCCESS OR FAILURE FOR THE BEGIN MISSION ACCORDING TO CRITERIA NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE WHICH HAVE APPLIED TO THE VISITS OF OTHER ISRAELI PRIME MINISTERS. AS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, ISRAELIS WILL BE SEEKING PUBLIC REAFFIRMATION- BOTH VERBAL AND TANGIBLE - OF OUR SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP, AN EXPLICIT RESTATEMENT OF OUR FUNDAMENTAL AND

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL, AND REASSURANCES THAT OUR SUPPORT TRANSCENDS WHATEVER PRESENT DIFFERENCES THERE ARE IN OUR RESPECTIVE APPROACHES TO NEGOTIATIONS. ALTHOUGH BEGIN HIMSELF IS APPARENTLY NOT COMING WITH A

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DETAILED SHOPPING LIST, MANY ISRAELIS WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE WHETHER WE RESTATE OUR COMMITMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AS WELL AS WHETHER WE ACT ON ANY OF THE PENDING SPECIFIC ITEMS.

6. SOON AFTER THE VISIT ISRAELIS WILL BE SCRUTINIZING THE PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC PROUNOUNCEMENTS, MEASURING THEM AGAINST EARLIER STATEMENTS BY HIS PREDECESSORS AND HIMSELF, AND ASSESSING WHETHER THEY REPEAT, GO BEYOND OR SEEM TO RETREAT FROM OUR PREVIOUS FORMULATIONS. OBVIOUSLY, ANY PRESIDENTIAL PRAISE FOR BEGIN'S STATES-MANLIKE AND RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE, AND ANY AFFIRMATION OF OUR CONFIDENCE IN HIM AS A NATIONAL LEADER WITH WHOM WE CAN WORK IN SEEKING A PEACE SETTLEMENT, WOULD BE REASSURING. SUCH STATEMENTS WOULD OF COURSE HELP BUILD UP BEGIN'S IMAGE AND STANDING IN ISRAELI POLITICAL CIRCLES, BUT, EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEY WOULD REDUCE THE ALMOST INEVITABLE PUBLIC ANXIETIES HERE ABOUT THE DURABILITY OF OUR SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL.

7. THIS KIND OF REASSURANCE OF OUR CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR "BEGIN THE STATESMAN" MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER FOR HIM TO TAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE ON NEGOTIATIONS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. IF HE COULD DEMONSTRATE AT HOME THAT HE HAS SHORED UP THE U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP AFTER THE STRAINS (REAL OR IMAGINED) OF RECENT MONTHS, HE WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION, BOTH POLITICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY, TO LEAD THE ISRAELI PUBLIC TO ACCEPT THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY AND PRAGMATISM IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AHEAD. THAT IS, OF COURSE, IF HE DECIDES ON THE BASIS OF HIS WASHINGTON MEETINGS TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION. WE HARDLY MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT BEGIN WILL BECOME A "DOVE" IF THE VISIT IS A

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SUCCESS, BUT CONFIDENCE IN OUR SUPPORT WOULD ENABLE HIM TO ADOPT A CONSTRUCTIVE RATHER THAN AN INTRANSIGENT LINE IF HE WISHES, AT LEAST IN TONE AND PERHAPS ALSO IN SUBSTANCE.

8. CONVERSELY, ISRAELIS WOULD IN ALL LIKELIHOOD REGARD THE VISIT AS A FAILURE IF IT CONCLUDED WITH PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF A RIFT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. PUBLIC REITERATION OF OUR RECENT STATEMENTS DURING OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE VISIT- WITH NO APPARENT CHANGE EVEN IN NUANCE A WOULD BE SEEN AS SIGNALING THE FAILURE OF BEGIN'S MISSION. IT WOULD CONFIRM TO ISRAELIS WHO ARE ALREADY ANXIOUS ABOUT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THEIR FUTURE THAT WE ARE DETERMINED TO PUSH AHEAD ON A COURSE WE HAVE ALREADY OUTLINED PUBLICLY, REGARDLESS OF THEIR VIEWS. THE WORST SCENARIO FROM THE ISRAELI VIEWPOINT WOULD PROBABLY BE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A "REASSESSMENT" OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND/OR PRESS LEAKS THAT WE WOULD BE CONSIDERING EITHER REDUCTION OR WITHHOLDING OF ECONOMIC OR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. ANY OF THESE WOULD SERVE TO STRENGTHEN FEELINGS OF ISOLATION AND PARANOIA WHICH THE RIGHT-WING PRESS FANS TO ENCOURAGE ISRAELIS TO STICK TO HAWKISH POSITIONS.

9. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD THEN BE IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE BEGIN SHOWING THE KIND OF FLEXIBILITY WHICH WE HAVE NOTED ABOVE AS IMPORTANT FOR CONTINUATION OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. INDEED, THE OPPOSITE IS MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR - I.E., ISRAELIS RALLYING AROUND THE GOVERNMENT AND CLOSING RANKS AGAINST WHAT THEY WOULD INTERPRET AS PRESSURES ON THEM TO MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS LIKELY TO JEOPARDIZE THEIR FUNDAMENTAL SECURITY, WITH POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS EVOKING PUBLIC RECOLLECTION OF THE 1975 REASSESSMENT. IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING TO SEE THE

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GOVERNMENT THEN AUTHORIZE NEW SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK (IT MAY DO SO IN ANY CASE) AND WIN BROAD PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THIS DEFIANT GESTURE. A CHAIN OF EVENTS COULD BE SET IN MOTION INVOLVING POTENTIALLY SERIOUS SETBACKS TO OUR OVERALL MIDDLE EAST OBJECTIVES.

10. IN SUM, THERE IS A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE ABOUT THE CARTER-BEGIN MEETING WHICH IS PERCEIVED IN ISRAEL AS A KIND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL/POLITICAL FORK IN THE ROAD - EITHER STRENGTHENING THE BILATERAL DIALOGUE ON THE PEACE PROCESS OR MOVING TOWARD A CONFRONTATION OF SOME KIND. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE THAT THE MEETING WILL BE READ HERE AS INCONCLUSIVE, IN WHICH CASE THE "MOMENT OF TRUTH" ASPECT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED SO IMPORTANT OR WILL AT LEAST BE SEEN AS HAVING BEEN DEFERRED. THE ISRAELI PERCEPTION OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND THEIR APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS IS NOT A MATTER WHICH IS

RESOLVED ONCE AND FOR ALL ON A SINGLE OCCASION. IN  
THAT SENSE, THE BEGIN-CARTER MEETING CAN BE SEEN- AND  
IS SEEN - AS THE OPENING CHAPTER IN A NEW PHASE OUR  
RELATIONSSHIP, RATHER THAN ANY FORM OF ARMAGEDDON.  
THAT IS ITS IMPORTANCE.  
LEWIS

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## Message Attributes

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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, OVIP, IS, US, (BEGIN, MENAHEM)  
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**Type:** TE  
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